



St Robert's RC First School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY309181
Inspection date 19 January 2006
Inspector Marie Mcconville

Setting Address St. Roberts First School, Oldgate, Morpeth, Northumberland,
NE61 1QF

Telephone number

E-mail

Registered person St. Robert's RC First Governing Body

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Robert's nursery opened in September, 2006. It is situated in St Robert's RC First School in the town of Morpeth in Northumberland. Children have access to the nursery-room, school hall, dedicated outdoor play area and the school playground. The nursery has 2 members of staff and each of them hold an appropriate qualification. The nursery is open from 08.45 until 11.45 and 12.15 until 15.15, Monday to Friday during term-time. There are 27 children on-roll, each of whom

receive funded nursery education. The nursery welcomes children who have special educational needs and those who speak English as a second language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good personal hygiene through the routine of the nursery and their interactions with nursery staff. For example, children are given gentle reminders about washing their hands after toileting and why they need to do so, promoting their understanding of being healthy through good hygiene practice. Extensive policies are in place and put into practice to promote the health and wellbeing of children. However, a policy regarding the admission of sick children is not in place, accident logs have not been signed by parents and written parental permission to seek or administer emergency treatment has not been sought.

Children enjoy healthy snacks of fresh fruit, water and milk. They sit together and talk about why fruit is good for you. Topics and themes provide meaningful activities about healthy eating promoting children's understanding and knowledge of being healthy through diet. Special dietary requirements are recorded and adhered to, further promoting the health and wellbeing of children. Children have access to water when they wish as they independently access drinks via a water fountain.

Children develop their physical skills through a good range of indoor and outdoor activities to promote their small and large motor skills and their coordination. They have many opportunities to use tools, such as scissors, knives, writing materials and paint brushes. They access large equipment, such as climbing apparatus and wheeled toys. Well planned activities to further develop children's physical skills are delivered by staff so that children take part with great enthusiasm and delight in physical sessions that help to develop their understanding of how their bodies work as they, run, negotiate obstacles, balance on tiptoes and curl into balls. Children are developing their understanding of bodily awareness as they make comments about bodily changes after rigorous physical activity. Outdoor play on a daily basis further contributes to children's health and wellbeing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, welcoming and well maintained environment. Children's work is well presented and displayed alongside photographs of what children have done, providing a visually stimulating environment that generates discussion. Children are safe and secure in their environment and during outings because staff put into practice a range of procedures to maximise the safety of the children. For example, detailed risk assessments are completed and staff are highly vigilant at all times observing and responding to children's needs to preserve their safety and wellbeing.

Children have access to a variety of good quality toys and equipment that are well maintained and presented. For example, an interactive and well presented role-play area promote and stimulate independent learning. The layout of the room and the accessibility of equipment means that children can move around freely and make choices about what they want to do, promoting their independence and confidence.

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the range of policies and procedures regarding health and safety procedures to protect and preserve children's wellbeing. Children are beginning to show awareness of everyday safety issues within the nursery as they talk to each other about not running and not pushing. Children's welfare is promoted by staff who have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibility regarding child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settle well into the nursery life because staff are supportive and have begun to establish relationships with children and their parents through home visits and making opportunities for nursery visits prior to their admission. Children have developed good relationships with staff; they are confident in their environment and access the good range and variety of activities that are presented to them with enjoyment and delight. Children are interested and eager to take part in new experiences, such as joining in with the school assembly. Staff listen carefully to what children say, respond to them effectively and celebrate their achievements so that children have good self-esteem and have developing independence.

Nursery Education

Children are confident, independent and have a developing sense of self and as a member of their community. They confidently find their coat pegs, put away their reading folders, select a book and sit on the carpet in readiness for the beginning of the session. Children chat together and often initiate discussions with staff about what they have done. They confidently ask for help to put on socks and shoes after physical education and independently see to their own toileting needs. Children have a sense of belonging; they accept the rules of the setting and react enthusiastically to changes within daily routines, such as taking part in the school assembly. Older children maintain interest and show perseverance to complete a task, while younger children show pleasure in their achievements. For example, during sand play; a younger child excitedly showed his friends how to build a castle in the sand. Older children show initiative as they select and put on aprons prior to painting. They recognise the needs of others and show care and consideration. For example, an older child helped a younger child to put on and fasten his apron.

Generally children maintain their concentration and focus for prolonged periods of time during adult-led activities. However, sometimes some younger children begin to lose interest because the activity is not set at the correct pitch for every child. Children learn about their own community and the wider world through well planned activities, such as visitors calling at the nursery, meaningful practical activities, such as food tasting, and their access to positive images of diversity. Children listen well

and respond to simple and more complex instructions, such as tidy up-time and snack-time, when they enthusiastically take part in tasks. Children enthusiastically take part in circle-time at the beginning of the session. They listen well to what is being said and confidently respond to questions asked. Children initiate conversation with each other as they play, while older children talk confidently about what they are doing. For example, a child described the features of her painting, what she was going to do next and predicted the end result.

Children enjoy using books and they handle them with care, have favourite books, follow the storyline and predict what will happen next. Children enjoy mark-making, as they practice using tools, such as paint brushes, and make marks with their fingers in the sand. Older children make good attempts at writing their name, making well formed letters. Older children identify letter sounds during adult-led activities and they confidently make good attempts at identifying beginning letter sounds. For example, a child identified the letter 'S' is for seeds and then identified that there are two S's in seeds. Children show great enthusiasm as they take part in activities to practice counting. Children count in rote beyond nine and reliably count objects beyond five. They have many opportunities during everyday activities to practice counting. For example, they count how many children are present, how many children are going outdoors and how many children are playing in the sand. Older children recognise and name numbers beyond ten and identify numbers below ten as being units. Older children use simple calculation as they add one more or subtract one to identify a given number. For example, an older child added one to 2006 to make 2007 during discussions about the date. Children begin to use mathematical language as descriptors, such as big and little, more and less as they play in the sand. They learn about shape through planned activities and recognise that they have made a circle as they join hands during physical education. Older children use shape purposefully as they make and name circles as flowers and make a square to represent a house. Children use size and number to group objects as they select two big cars and two small cars when playing with small world figures.

Children use facial expression to identify how they are feeling, they grimace when they are uncertain and smile to show pleasure. They show curiosity about how things work and why things happen as they investigate how wheels turn on cars and balance them on ramps. Children notice changes in the weather and talk about why they got wet in the rain. They use small world toys to create simple scenarios relating to their own lives and people who they know. They recall events, such as a visit to the park, they look at photographs of activities that they have taken part in and describe what they were doing. Older children have a developing sense of time, they describe the days of the week naming the previous day, the following day and what will happen on Saturday, saying, 'We don't come to nursery.' and exclaim, 'That mark has been on my trousers for ten days.' Children are developing good Information Technology skills as they confidently use the computer. They move the cursor using the mouse to complete a simple programme and explain what they are doing and what will happen next. They show confidence and understanding as they interact with the whiteboard to complete a task. Children name and use colours purposefully when painting a picture of their house and garden. They mix colours with understanding to gain a desired effect, talking through what they are doing and describing accurately what changes they observe. Children have access to different media, such as clay,

play-dough and collage materials, through planned activities. They have opportunities to experiment with sound when they make shakers and explore and experiment with musical instruments. Children play alongside each other creating simple storylines with small world figures and vehicles, and use their imagination during solitary play in the sand, creating simple scenarios with scoops and buckets.

The quality of teaching is good and overall, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. The manager has a good understanding of the foundation stage and the teaching methods that help children to learn. The planning is led by topics and themes and underpinned by the areas of learning. The manager is highly skilled at questioning children to find out what they know and can do, to consolidate their knowledge and understanding so that children are becoming good problem-solvers and are developing confidence, independence and initiative. Adult-led activities that are the main focus for children's learning are generally received very well. Children take part with enthusiasm, maintain interest and show perseverance. However, at times younger children begin to lose concentration because they have been sitting for long periods of time and they have insufficient opportunities to extend their learning through non-structured, child-driven play.

Children's behaviour is outstanding. Staff promote positive behaviour, they congratulate achievement and provide positive role-models so that children behave very well, are developing good manners and are beginning to think about the needs of others. Children's assessment begins on their admission to the nursery; 'My starting nursery book', helps inform initial assessment that parents take part in completing. Staff use observations, samples of work, photographs and a checklist derived from the stepping stones. However, assessment is not yet rigorous enough to identify gaps and reliably inform future planning. The nursery welcomes children who have special educational needs. Staff promote the full inclusion of children through carefully planning activities and ensuring that good communications between the nursery, parents and other professionals are maintained. The well planned and managed activities mean that every child has the opportunity to engage fully, enjoy their experience and make good progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are eager to attend and enjoy the time spent in a welcoming environment that values and acknowledges each child as an individual. Meaningful information is recorded in respect of children's individual needs and home visits by the nursery manager promote the smooth transition between nursery and home so that children settle well and stress is minimised. Children learn about their own community through outings to the park and visitors going to the setting. Children celebrate their own religion by taking part in daily prayers together, learn about other cultures through taking part in meaningful activities and having access to a good range of resources to promote diversity. The nursery has good arrangements in place to support children who have special needs. Careful planning, good communications with parents and other agencies means that every child has full access to the range of activities that are provided.

Children's behaviour is outstanding. Staff have high but realistic expectations of children. They listen well to what children say, are courteous to each other and the children so that children feel safe, valued and are developing good self-esteem. Staff observe and intervene appropriately, are firm, gentle, give reassurance and gentle explanations so that all children are learning about the behavioural boundaries of the nursery. Children have a positive attitude towards each other, they show concern and care, are able to share, take turns and are developing good manners. The ethos of the nursery and interactions of staff fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff are friendly, approachable and ensure that opportunities are made to take part in daily discussion with parents about their children. Parents have access to good quality information about the foundation stage and the six areas of learning. Monthly and weekly newsletters keep parents informed about topics and themes that underpin the weekly activities so that parents can effectively continue children's learning opportunities in the home. Parents are welcome in the nursery and take part in activities, such as outings, and have opportunities to share books with their children at home through access to their 'Reading Folder'. Children's developmental files are readily available to help to keep parents informed about their children's progress. Formal mechanisms to discuss children's progress are currently being developed so that staff and parents can form effective partnerships to promote the individual needs of children. Positive, verbal feedback was received from parents about the helpful, friendly staff and the highly valued service provided.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The overall organisation of the nursery means that children have opportunities to take part in a range of activities that promotes their development and learning. The recruitment and selection of nursery staff means that staff have appropriate qualifications, are suitable to care for young children and are committed to improving their skills through the ongoing uptake of short training courses. A satisfactory range of policies and procedures are in place and generally meet the requirements of the regulator. However, an induction policy is not available and other policies are widely and not easy to access because they are situated in different access points. The care of the children is given high priority, this is reflected in the enthusiastic, well motivated staff team, particularly the manager who is committed to improving her knowledge of childcare and education. Good communication between the nursery and the school promotes children's smooth transition from nursery to reception class.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The line management of nursery staff through annual performance management agreement and interim meetings mean that staff have good opportunities to develop their personal and professional skills and knowledge to enhance the care and education of the children in the nursery. The nursery staff are committed to the ongoing improvement of the educational programme through regular communications within the school setting and external advisory teacher to discuss and monitor the educational provision.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of all of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure accident reports are signed by parents
- ensure that written parental permission is in place to seek or administer emergency treatment and a policy is in place regarding the admission of sick children
- ensure that arrival and departure times of children and staff is recorded on a daily basis
- continue to develop the range of policies and procedures and ensure that they are easily accessible.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop children's assessment so that it shows clear progress and reliably informs future planning

- assess the use of time so that children have more opportunities to continue their learning through child driven activities.

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